

FARMLAND PROTECTION – Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Farmland Protection Policy Act discourages Federal activities that would convert farmland to nonagricultural purposes. Prime and important farmland includes all land that is defined as prime, unique, or farmlands of statewide or local importance.

In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by the local agency or agencies concerned. In places, additional farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

Currently there are no designated prime or unique farmlands, or farmlands of statewide importance in Alaska. However, the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough have adopted criteria for Farmlands of Local Importance for lands within their jurisdictional boundaries. The criteria encompasses all soils in Land Capability Classes 2 and 3, and those soils in Land Capability Class and Subclass 4c.

Threshold for Review: Properties proposed for new construction, and rehabilitation that expands the footprint of the building.

Level of Concurrence Required: Evidence from the Web Soils Survey database [Web Soil Survey](#) that shows on a map that the project site is not located in a designated soils of local importance area in the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District or the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. It can be forestland, pastureland, cropland or other land, but not water or urban built-up land. If after checking the website you find that your project is located in a designated soils of local importance area, or if you are not sure if it is, contact the National Resource Conservation Service.

Basic Steps to Obtain Concurrence:

1. Is your project for new construction, acquisition of undeveloped land or change in use of land or property. If not, the Farmland Policy Act does not apply. If it does go to #2.
2. Review the Web Soils Survey database [Web Soil Survey](#) that shows on a map that the project site is not located in a designated soils of local importance area in the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District or the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. If your project site is not located in this designated area, then record your documentation on the Statutory Worksheet and attach the documentation. If your project is located in a designated soils of local importance area, determine if your project meets one of the following exemptions:
 - **Projects on land already in urban development or used for water storage.** Project on land used for water storage or already in or committed urban development (this includes

land with a density of 30 structures per 40 acre area. It also includes lands identified as “urbanized area” (UA) on the Census Bureau Map, or as urban area mapped with a “tint overprint” on the USGS topographical maps, or as “urban built-up” on the USDA Important Farmland Maps. Please note that land “zoned” for development, i.e. non-agricultural use, does not exempt a project from compliance with the FPPA).

- **Construction of on-farm structures needed for farm operations.**

If your project meets one of the above exemptions, maintain copies of all of the documents you have used to make your determination with your environmental review file. If your project does not meet one of the above exemptions, complete form AD-1006, “Farmland Conversion Impact Rating” and send to the local NRCS District Conservationist. You can find a PDF version of this form at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/fppa/>. NRCS has 45 days to make a determination. Work with NRCS until your project will have minimum impact on the protected farmland, but the final decision belongs to the Responsible Entity.

Additional information regarding the Farmland Protection Act and the National Resource Conservation Service can be found at the following Internet address:

National Resource Conservation Service:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome>

Farmland Information Center: <http://www.farmlandinfo.org/alaska/>

Point of Contact: Mark Clark, State Soils Scientist
National Resource Conservation Service
800 W. Evergreen #100
Palmer, AK 99645-6539
(907) 761-7759
Email: Mark.Clark@ak.usda.gov